



The “Serving and Leading” guiding principle

New Apostolic Church
International



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Foreword

The “Serving and Leading” guiding principle creates a uniform and binding foundation for the actions of ministers and all Church members who perform a service in the New Apostolic Church. It creates transparency and trust and serves to promote appreciation, motivation, and identification.

The guiding principle is closely related to the Vision and Mission of the Church. The Vision illustrates the desired ideal image of the Church and describes fundamental values that are binding for every Church activity and endeavour. The Mission is intended to awaken enthusiasm for the gospel and win people over to God.

Serving and leading in the Church must be characterised by love for God and our neighbour, obedience to the divine will, and an intimate prayer life.



Summary

In summary, the guiding principle states the following:

- Jesus Christ and His doctrine are the binding standard for our leadership and service.
- Leadership in the Church always has a serving character. We show this by way of respect, care, and mutual support.
- We are constantly developing our professional, spiritual, and personal leadership skills.
- In our leadership responsibility and spiritual ministry, we strive to exercise ecclesiastical authority—which always emanates from Christ—with love and respect, and by practising the gospel in exemplary fashion.
- Our relationship with God and the believers is at the centre of our ministry and service. We promote a lively fellowship through mutual respect, openness, and modesty.
- Those who work in the Church respect their own limitations and make full use of opportunities for delegation by conferring the necessary responsibility and autonomy of action upon others.
- We actively seek to promote the joy of working together through support, sensible decision-making, and the greatest possible level of participation.
- Regular discussions, collective prayer, and the will to reconcile ensure constructive cooperation and promote peace with one another.



Introduction

The gospel of Jesus Christ is timeless in its validity. On the other hand, expectations pertaining to social interactions are subject to change.

Our manner of serving and leading must always correspond to the example of Jesus Christ, who was a servant to all human beings (cf. John 13: 15–16). This is clearly illustrated by the Vision and Mission of the New Apostolic Church and is one of the leadership requirements for volunteer Church members.

The self-image of the apostolate serves as a guiding standard for all those who serve in the Church: “Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand” (2 Corinthians 1: 24; cf. CNAC 7.6.3).

Vision:

A church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align their lives to the gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life.

Mission:

Reaching out to all people in order to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptise them with water and the Holy Spirit.

Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others.



Serving

Ministry and service are part of the life of the Church. Without them, the Church cannot fulfil its task, namely to bear credible witness to Christ. However, ministry and service cannot be completely distinguished from one another, because ministry is characterised by the aspect of service to Jesus Christ and His church.

Serving God and serving our neighbour belong together in the spirit of the Church's Mission. We serve God by bringing Him praise and glory, and by declaring His great deeds. Service to others consists of providing them with pastoral care and support.

A spiritual ministry constitutes authorisation, blessing, and sanctification issued through ordination for service in the church of Christ. It is exercised in the power of the Holy Spirit. Any gifts the ordained person may possess are blessed and sanctified for the exercise of ministry. No new talents are conferred through the ordination.

Ministers cannot perform their services on the basis of their own abilities, but rather only in connection with the apostolate and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Serving in ministry is always linked to Jesus Christ and the Apostles He has sent. The Apostle ministry is responsible for all doctrine.

Ministers also demonstrate the sincerity of their desire to live by the gospel by accepting available offers of theological education as well as any others that facilitate leadership in service to the Church.

In the church of Christ, ministry must be distinguished from the various services that support the proclamation of the gospel and benefit the believers, which can also be performed without ordination.

Beyond that, all believers are called to serve Jesus Christ by following Him. This includes professing Jesus Christ as Lord and attesting the truth of the gospel in both word and deed.



Requirements of leaders

In the Church, duties associated with leadership are exercised primarily by the following:

- members of the apostolate
- district rectors
- congregational rectors

but also, in an expanded sense, by

- ministers in priestly ministries
- youth leaders
- leaders at all instructional levels
- choir leaders
- orchestra leaders
- chairpersons of Work Groups and Project Groups

In addition to spiritual and personal skills, leadership skills are also required to fulfil the various tasks in oneness with the apostolate. If these are not already present, leaders should demonstrate a willingness to acquire them.

Spiritual competencies:

- love for God
- profession of the doctrine
- knowledge of the liturgy of the divine services and acts of blessing
- an authentic life of faith
- humbleness

Personal characteristics and competencies:

- openness
- honesty
- empathy
- confidentiality
- reliability
- load-bearing capacity
- resilience
- commitment
- organisational skills
- a conciliatory attitude
- respect for other cultures

Leadership competencies:

- communication skills
- the ability to take criticism
- the ability to work in a team
- conflict management skills
- delegation skills
- motivational skills
- willingness to review and develop personal leadership style
- credibility (for example, keeping promises, acting in a sensible manner, justifying decisions)



Authority

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Together with the Apostles, the Chief Apostle leads the Church. The Chief Apostle is the highest spiritual authority.

The legitimation to perform leadership services at the congregational or district level is usually conferred by the Apostle, or by the district or congregational rector, through the investiture of a particular function or duty. This external authority must be distinguished from internal authority.

External authority relies exclusively on the decision-making power conferred upon leaders on the basis of their position within a hierarchy.

Inner authority is conferred upon leaders by those around them, and leaders can promote this through their

- spiritual, human, and professional skills
- internalisation and practice of Church teaching
- persuasiveness based on credible demeanour and well-founded communication of teaching statements
- proper application and observance of Church regulations
- truthfulness and reliability.

It is best when the inner authority of leaders is perceived by those around them. It is to define their leadership style. In this way, leaders can promote the implementation of the Church's mission, strengthen trust, and support motivation and consensus.



Leadership style

Leadership style should always serve the implementation of the Church's Vision. A ministry, duty, or function must never be abused in pursuit of personal interests.

To lead means to

- have a goal, show others the path that leads there, and pursue it with them.

Leadership in the Church entails:

- having Jesus Christ as role model in a manner evident to others (cf. conversation with the disciples of Emmaus in Luke 24: 13 et seq.)
- praying for spiritual guidance
- being aware that the commitment of church members is of a voluntary nature
- keeping the workloads of helpers reasonable
- being free of personal ambition and putting the interests of the Church and its members first
- showing loyalty
- evaluating facts impartially
- making decisions by consensus wherever possible.

Leadership tasks include:

- ensuring the flow of information
- recognising and promoting the spiritual and professional skills of the congregation's members
- promoting the participation of congregational members
- assessing the need for ministers and developing proposals for the apostolate
- delegating tasks
- encouraging others to help plan and participate
- allowing participation in decision-making
- clarifying the needs of the Church
- advocating for the concerns of those who help along
- giving constructive feedback (both praise and criticism)

Personal interactions are characterised by:

- appreciation and neighbourly love
- respect for people who think differently
- constructive feedback
- trusting collaboration
- tolerance for errors
- openness to suggestions



Delegation

The delegation of Church duties gives ministers the necessary time to prepare for divine services, provide pastoral care, and perform leadership tasks. Delegation promotes joy in serving, motivates Church members, and supports the implementation of the Church's Mission. Ministers who are slated for future responsibilities can receive support through mentoring.

General notes

- Delegation is the assignment of tasks, authority, and responsibility by a leader.
- It is important to verify in advance whether the person has the necessary skills and free time to complete the task at hand.
- Responsibility for completing a task correctly and on time is conferred along with the task.
- The leadership responsibility remains with the leader, as does the obligation to provide support when problems arise.

Procedure

- If possible, duties in the Church should be conferred by way of a personal conversation.
- Explain the content, significance, and value of the task for the Church.
- Agree on expected results, time required for completion, and the conceptual and decision-making framework.
- Determine how to proceed when problems arise.
- Regularly inquire about results and any need for support.



Communication

Regular meetings with open and respectful discussions promote trusting cooperation and help avoid uncertainty and misunderstandings. Differences of opinion are discussed without prejudice.

Basic remarks

- It is an essential task of leadership to ensure the flow of information.
- It is in the interest of each individual to understand goals, intentions, backgrounds, and interconnections.
- It is also necessary for individuals to be able to communicate their concerns.
- The unity of the Church is best served when rules are explained as fully as possible. Questions and any subsequent discussions that arise are not seen as a sign of disagreement, but as an effort to contribute to unity.
- In the interest of unity, the decisions, orders, and guidelines of the Church's leadership must be communicated and implemented loyally and never be interpreted arbitrarily.

Prerequisites for open communication

- required information is passed along in a timely manner.
- all participants treat each other respectfully and without prejudice.
- communication should take place without fear.
- participants listen to one another in order to better understand each other.
- there is openness to other opinions.
- there is a willingness to revise personal positions or opinions.

Communication by e-mail and in social networks

The principles for open and respectful communication also apply when using media (see the Social Media Guideline NACI, 2026):

- communication should always occur in such a way that it does not cause offense to the public.
- social media are not suited for conflict resolution. Personal discussions are preferable.
- restraint is advised when criticising individuals, as media communication is one-sided, which makes it impossible to assess its effect on other involved parties.



Participation and representation

Decisions and guidelines should be prepared with those responsible for their implementation, wherever possible. This gives leaders a perspective that transcends their own experiences, assessments, and competencies.

Broad participation in decision-making processes can

- bring about greater acceptance of decisions
- communicate appreciation
- help motivate the participants
- avoid conflicts
- take into account the entire structural depth of the respective organisation
- incorporate alternative solutions
- improve the quality of the proposed regulation.

Ultimately, if all efforts have been made to incorporate all valid input, those involved must have respect for the authority and responsibility conferred on the leading minister.

Ministers with leadership responsibilities loyally represent the Church's regulations in the congregation, district, or working area. They also have a duty to represent the Church in public.

Beyond that, leaders advocate for the needs and interests of the congregational members in their care to higher levels of leadership. In order to get to know the concerns of congregational members, they seek out and promote opportunities for exchanging ideas.

Representation reinforces

- a sense of community
- mutual trust
- recognition and satisfaction.



Conflict resolution

In interpersonal relationships, differing opinions, opposing interests, and sometimes even prejudices may well collide, which can result in conflicts. A Christian community is not defined by an absence of conflicts, but by the way in which such conflicts are resolved. Humility, love, and mutual respect facilitate conflict resolution.

Leaders should generally strive for solutions based on consensus.

Conflicts can also be an opportunity for new solutions. If conflicts that have arisen cannot be resolved, any member can refer the matter to leaders of a higher level.

Conflict avoidance

Most of the time, conflicts can be avoided by

- having regular meetings
- allocating duties clearly
- allowing for participation in the decision-making process
- clearly defining decision-making powers

Conflict resolution

Leaders should deal promptly with any conflicts that arise. It is recommended that they

- speak with the parties involved in the conflict in an atmosphere of understanding in order to comprehend their points of view.
- look for the cause of the conflict while also reflecting on one's own behaviour.
- distinguish between the individual and his or her actions in the event of a conflict.
- encourage a willingness to compromise.
- look for, and agree on, a collective solution.

Lack of competence

In cases where problems are caused by a lack of personal competencies on the part of a leader, these deficiencies must be addressed by offering assistance. If they cannot be remedied—for example, by training—a change in personnel must be considered. The necessary discussions are to be conducted in a respectful manner while preserving the dignity of the person involved.

Guiding message for implementation

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

Colossians 3: 12-14





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